

K-590

1825-1860

Robson House

Galena

Private

Built on a narrow but deep Main Street lot when Galena (still called Georgetown Crossroads) was expanding in the quarter century before the Civil War, the simple frame, two-storey, two-part, gable-roofed Robson house is transitional in style. The form is still vernacular Federal, but the house's details show some Greek Revival influences in corbelling and broad, plain, flat surfaces. Persistence of form and style is one theme in Kent County's architectural history. Although the Chestertown gentry and the especially prosperous farmers in the county sometimes built quite sophisticated houses in a currently fashionable style, change was slower in coming to the outlying towns and to those building more modest dwellings. This is not a large dwelling, but a modest one for a middle-class family. It has been tenanted during most of its existence, from at least 1877 until the current ownership. It is not now known whether it was built to be rented. The 24-foot wide main facade, facing west to the street, has three evenly-spaced bays on both storeys with the main entry in the south bay. The plan of the main section is side hall, with one room on each storey originally. The front of the second-storey stair hall has been enclosed (and some space taken from the adjacent room) to create a small front bedroom there. The rear, perpendicular wing with north wall continuous with the main section's north wall is also two storeys tall but considerably lower; it is two bays deep and contains a dining room and a kitchen on the first storey.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Robson House

### 2. Location

street & number N. Main Street (east side) ☐ not for publicationcity, town Galena ☐ vicinity of ☐ congressional districtstate ☐ county

### 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mr. and Mrs. Gary R. Robson

street &amp; number N. Main Street telephone no.: 648-5536

city, town Galena state and zip code Maryland 21635

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber EHP 65

street &amp; number Cross Street folio 582

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys ☐ None

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town ☐ state

## 7. Description

Survey No. K-590

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Built on a narrow but deep Main Street lot when Galena (still called Georgetown Crossroads) was expanding in the quarter Century before the Civil War, the simple frame, two-storey, two-part, gable-roofed Robson house is transitional in style. The form is still vernacular Federal, but the house's details show some Greek Revival influences in corbelling and broad, plain, flat surfaces. The 24 foot wide main facade, facing west to the street, has three evenly-spaced bays on both storeys with the main entry in the south bay. The plan of the main section is side hall, with one room on each storey originally. The front of the second-storey stair hall has been enclosed (and some space taken from the adjacent room) to create a small front bedroom there. The rear, perpendicular wing with north wall continuous with the main section's north wall is also two storeys tall but considerably lower; it is two bays deep and contains a dining room and a kitchen on the first storey. A shed-roofed porch fills the L between sections on the south side of the wing.

(Continued)

## 8. Significance

Survey No. K-590

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** Circa 1825–1860 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Robson House is a building dating from the important pre-Civil War expansion period of the crossroads community of Georgetown Crossroads, leading it to apply for incorporation in 1860. The house, in a row of frame houses from the same period, if not the earliest, is nonetheless one of the most conservative of them, clinging to an earlier, familiar form and style at least on the exterior and to a lesser extent on the interior. Persistence of form and style is one theme in Kent County's architectural history. Although the Chestertown gentry and the especially prosperous farmers in the county sometimes built quite sophisticated houses in a currently fashionable style, change was slower in coming to the outlying towns and to those building more modest dwellings. This is not a large dwelling, but a modest one for a middle-class family. It has been tenanted during most of its existence, from at least 1877 until the current ownership. It is not now known whether it was built to be rented.

(Continued)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-590

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Margaret Q. Fallaw, Survey Consultant		
	County Commissioners of Kent County		
organization	Historical Society of Kent County	date	October 23, 1985
	Courthouse		778-4600
street & number	Cross Street	telephone	778-3499
city or town	Chestertown	state	Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

The exterior walls of the house are now covered with blue-painted asbestos shingles over horizontal, lapped weatherboard. A small area of the underlying weatherboard is exposed on the rear wall of the main section under the porch. The exposure here is seven inches. The oldest paint appears to be a Spanish brown and the next, grey.

The front, main section is built over a crawl space, with at least most joists running front to back. Although the area could not be seen well, the under-hall joists seem to run the other direction, to a joist/girder under the hall wall. There is a dirt-floored cellar only under the dining room, the first room in the rear wing. It is entered through the porch floor on the south side of the wing. The entire building seems to have been built at the same time. There is no evidence that one section is an addition. Most of the 15-20" thick foundation is rubble-laid Port Deposit granite. This material was very commonly used in upper Kent County during the middle nineteenth century, probably because of proximity to Sassafras River wharves. This stone probably was shipped down the Bay to Georgetown, from where it was only a short distance to Galena. The base for the wing chimney is in the cellar. There is a tall, rectangular opening, with brick pilasters only one stretcher in width. Heavy 3" x 7" boards are the straight lintel, with brick construction continuing on above. There is brick nogging on the house sills that may extend up into the walls.

There are two chimneys, one in the main section within the wall in the center of the north end, and the other in the approximate center of the wing, for a dining room fireplace at the common wall of the two wing rooms. It is likely that a kitchen stove was once vented into it from the other side, and there may have been a second-storey stove vented into it as well. The main-section chimney is built of brick but has been parged. It appears to have a corbelled cap beneath the parging. The chimney opening is now closed except for a hooded metal stove pipe extension. The rear wing is tall and built of brick. It has a three-course corbelled (out and in) cap.

The roofs are now covered with asphalt shingles. Cornices are plain and boxed, now covered with aluminum. The main section's front and rear overhang is about 10-12". At the gables there are flush verge boards upon the asbestos shingles. There is no crown or bed molding. The wing roof is about 4-5 feet lower than the roof of the main section; the boxed cornice is smaller. On the interior, the wing second storey is several steps lower than that of the main section, and the second-storey ceiling is finished along the undersides of the rafters rather than at plate level.

Windows are double-hung and with 6-over-6 lights. Main-section windows are taller than wing windows. The windows of the main section's main facade have backband trim of an ovolo with fillets. Other trim is used elsewhere, some appearing to date from the re-siding. The shutters have been removed.

There once may have been a front porch; if so, no evidence can now be seen. Over the main entry there is a small shed-roofed canopy, supported by  
(continued)

simple wall brackets. The architrave is somewhat unusual. There is a built-up engaged "post" with face of the same symmetrical, recessed-to-the-center corbelling seen on trim inside. There is a pair of sidelights, each with three very narrow lights. There is a recessed panel beneath each, with two courses of corbelling at panel perimeter. The door, of stripped and refinished pine, has two vertical panels that are recessed with two courses of corbelling as panel molding (of 1-3/8" lattice). There is a three-light transom with three courses of corbelling above, which may have continued down as jamb trim. However, such trim may have been covered by asbestos shingles.

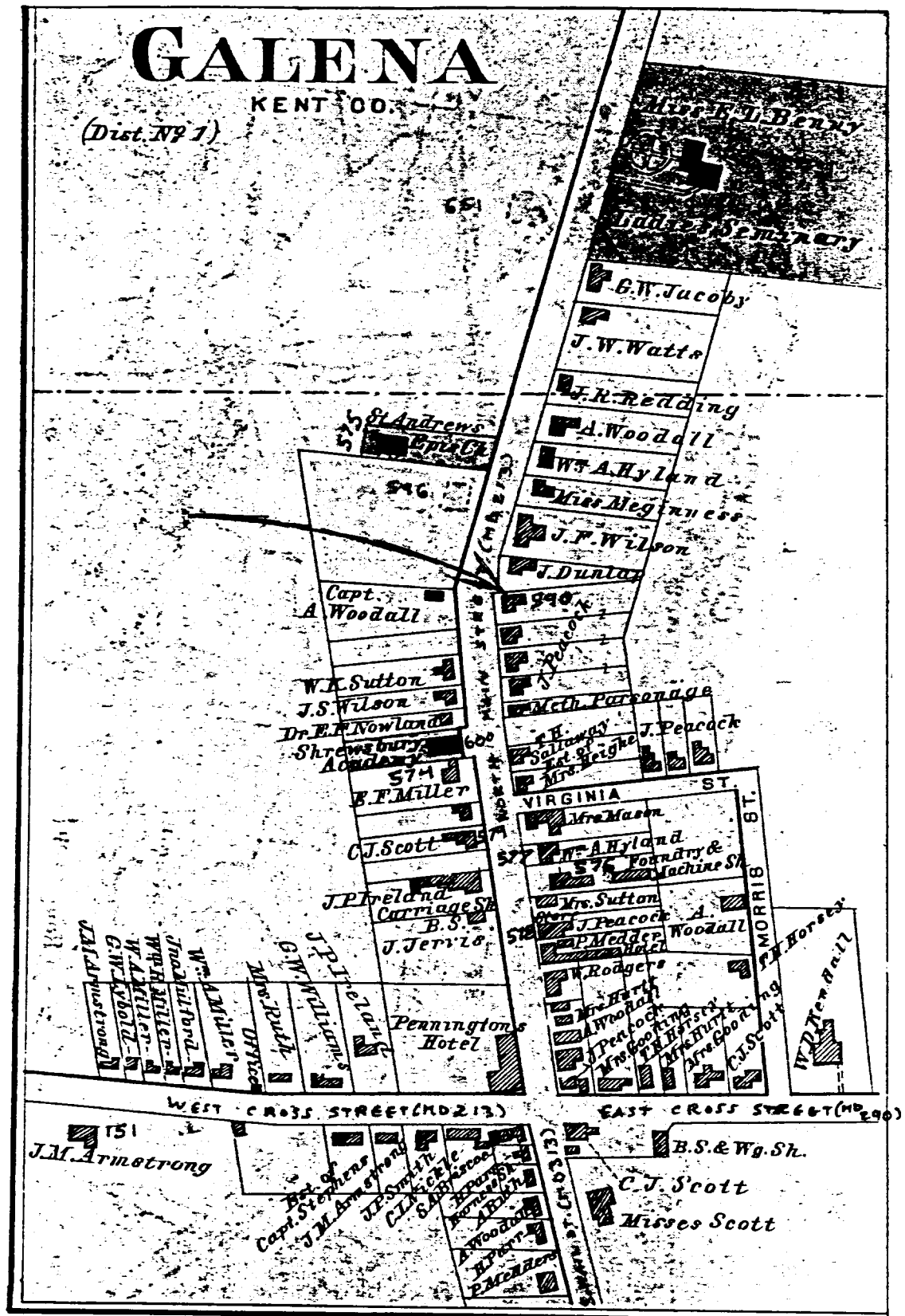
The dogleg stair rises along the south wall; there is a window at the landing and a rear-hall door to the porch under it. The stair is open-string, with two plain rectangular balusters (1-1/4" x 1") per tread. The newel, which like the nearly round 2" rail, may be of walnut. It is an early Victorian catalogue-order item. With a square base, it has a compoundly turned shaft and a fairly large compound round cap from which the rail rises. There are no intermediates of the same type at the landing. Instead there are simple, perhaps locally made battered small posts over which the rail runs at its turns. At the top they measure 1-1/4" square and at the bottom 2" square. The rail rises with a goose neck to the present last intermediate at the head of the stair on the second storey and then ends on the door trim to the added, small, hall bedroom. A secondary stair is enclosed in the northeast corner of the dining room, in the wing. There are a beaded-board-and-batten door to it and to the adjacent understair closet.

Mantels are simple, with numerous plain, flat surfaces yet with their frieze blocks still reminiscent of earlier Federal mantels. The fireplace of the main-section's first-storey room has a stove in front of it.

The house is part of the Galena town streetscape, where buildings are not set very far back from the sidewalks. Views are of buildings from various periods in Galena's history, but most close by seem to date from the middle nineteenth century.

It is not clear whether this house is shown on the 1860 Martenet map of Galena, though it seems to be (though the owner's name cannot be read). It and two houses to the north are shown, while to the south the space is vacant until the Methodist Episcopal parsonage a number of houses down. By the 1877 atlas map, this space is filled in, and all, including this house, are owned by Jeremiah Peacock, who held them for rental until his death in 1904.





#### GALENA BUSINESS REFERENCES.

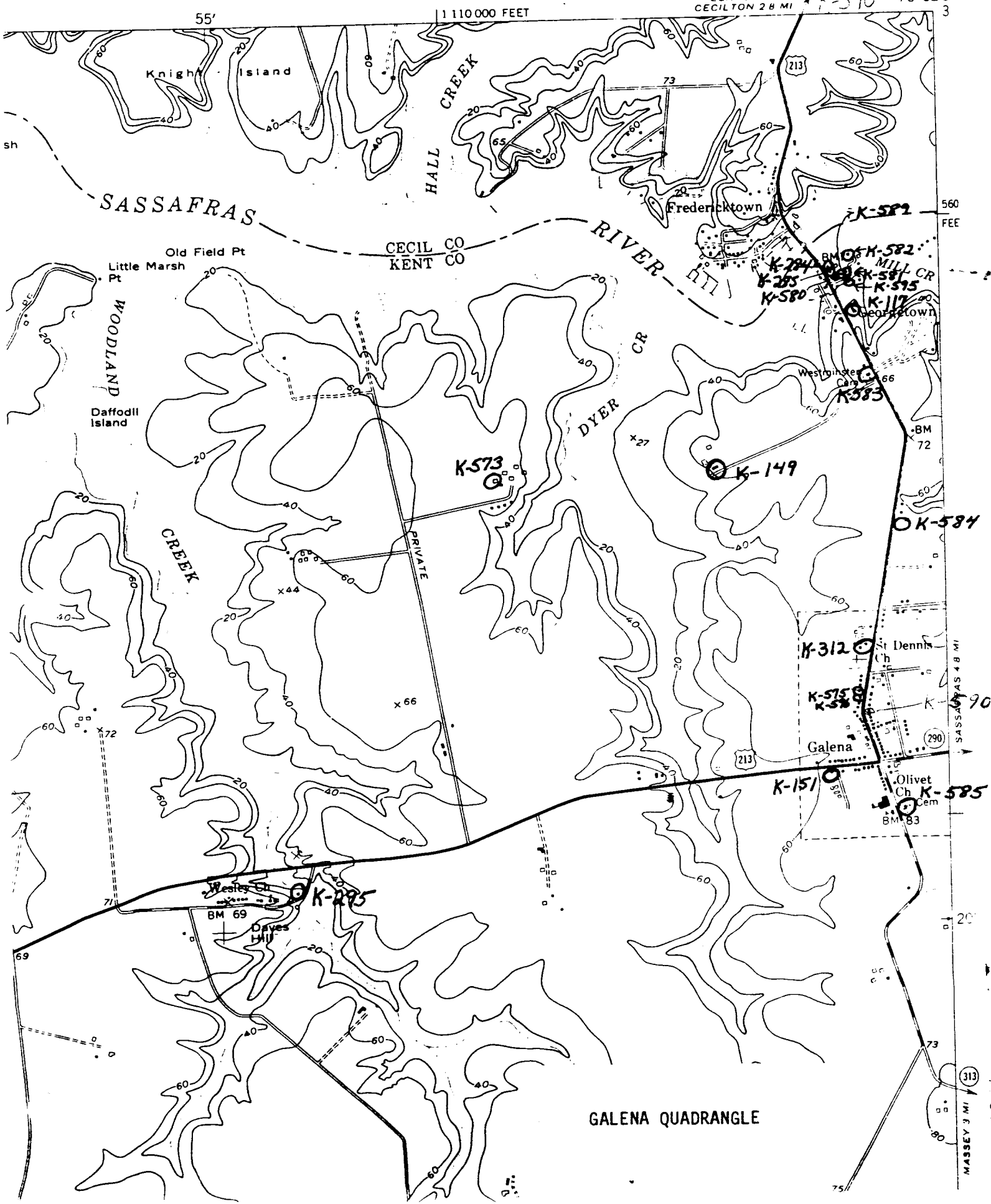
**JORGE STEEL**, Manufacturer of, and Dealer in Pumps of all kinds. Also Repairing done at short Notice.

**GEO. T. MCCAULEY**, Dealer in Groceries and Provisions. All kinds of Salt Meats, Fish, Flour, Meal, Choice Cigars, Tobacco, &c., very low for cash.

**HENRY PARR**, Manufacturer and Dealer in Saddles, Harness, Whips, Trunks, Valises, &c.

**G. W. WILLIAMS**, Blacksmith and Carriage-maker. Horse-shoeing and Repairing neatly and promptly done.

**G. W. LYBOLD**, Machinist and Engineer. Also Agent for Buckeye Reapers and Mowers and Sweep Stake Threshers, Eclipse Engine, Birdal Clover Huller, Ealien Rake and Agricultural Implements of all kinds. Engines repaired at short notice and reasonable terms.





K-590

Robson House

Main St., Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 11/20/85

View to west

61-0651



K-590

Robson House

Main St., Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 11/20/85

View to northeast

K590-16